

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

5            1. A golf putting aid comprising:  
             first and second attachment structures;  
             an upper alignment member disposed between and attached  
to the attachment structures;  
             a lower alignment member disposed between and attached to  
10 the attachment structures, such that the alignment members are  
vertically aligned to define a vertical plane which is  
perpendicular to a putting surface;  
             at least one longitudinal support member disposed between  
and fixedly attached to the attachment structures; and  
15            a target attached to the first attachment structure, and  
wherein the target defines an opening that is at least as  
large as a regulation size golf ball.

             2. The golf putting aid of claim 1, wherein the target  
20 comprises a first arm and a second arm that are spaced apart  
by a distance at least as large as the diameter of a  
regulation size golf ball.

             3. The golf putting aid of claim 1, wherein the target  
25 comprises a third arm that is spaced apart by from the putting  
surface by a distance at least as large as the diameter of a  
regulation size golf ball.

             4. The golf putting aid of claim 1, wherein the target  
30 comprises first and second arms extending generally parallel  
to each other and connected by a third arm, such that the  
first, second and third arms together define the target  
opening.

35            5. The golf putting aid of claim 4, wherein the first,

second and third arms together form a U-shape.

5           6. The golf putting aid of claim 1, wherein the target opening is centered with respect to the vertical plane.

          7. A golf putting aid comprising:  
          first and second attachment structures;  
10          an upper alignment member disposed between and attached to the attachment structures;  
          a lower alignment member disposed between and attached to the attachment structures, such that the alignment members are vertically aligned to define a vertical plane which is  
15          perpendicular to a putting surface;  
          at least one longitudinal support member having a first portion attached to the first attachment structure and a second portion, opposite from the first portion, attached to the second attachment structure; and  
20          wherein at least one of the alignment members is flexible.

          8. The golf putting aid of claim 7, wherein said at least one of the alignment members is expandable.

25           9. The golf putting aid of claim 7, wherein said at least one of the alignment members is composed of an elastic rope.

30           10. The golf putting aid of claim 7, wherein said at least one of the alignment members is generally circular in cross-section.

          11. The golf putting aid of claim 7, further comprising  
35          at least one reference marker to be used by a golfer as a

reference point during the golfer's putting stroke, wherein  
the at least one reference marker is slidable along one of the  
5        upper alignment member and the lower alignment member.

12. The golf putting aid of claim 7, further comprising  
a plurality of reference markers to be used by a golfer as  
reference points during the golfer's putting stroke, wherein  
10        each reference marker is slidable along one of the upper  
alignment member and the lower alignment member.

13. The golf putting aid of claim 12, wherein the  
plurality of reference markers comprises a back swing  
15        reference marker to be used by the golfer to aid the golfer in  
determining when to terminate the golfer's back swing, and a  
follow through reference marker to be used by the golfer to  
aid the golfer in determining when to terminate the golfer's  
follow through.

20        14. The golf putting aid of claim 13, wherein the  
plurality of reference markers further comprises a ball  
placement reference marker to be used by the golfer to aid the  
golfer in positioning the golf ball on the putting surface and  
25        concentric with the ball marker, such that a center line of  
the ball is vertically aligned with the vertical plane.

15. A golf putting aid comprising:  
first and second attachment structures;  
30        an upper alignment member disposed between and attached  
to the attachment structures;  
a lower alignment member disposed between and attached to  
the attachment structures, such that the alignment members are  
vertically aligned to define a vertical plane which is  
35        perpendicular to a putting surface;

at least one longitudinal support member disposed between  
and fixedly attached to the attachment structures, wherein the  
5        at least one longitudinal support member comprises a first  
portion attached to the first attachment structure and a  
second portion attached to the second attachment structure;  
and

          a hinge that pivotally connects the first portion of the  
10        at least one longitudinal support member to the second portion  
of the at least one longitudinal support member.

          16.     The golf putting aid of claim 15, wherein the  
alignment members are flexible.

15        17.     The golf putting aid of claim 15, wherein the  
alignment members are flexible and expandable.

          18.     The golf putting aid of claim 15, wherein the  
20        alignment members are each composed of an elastic rope.

          19.     A golf putting aid comprising:  
          first and second attachment structures;  
          an upper alignment member disposed between and attached  
25        to the attachment structures; and  
          a lower alignment member disposed between and attached to  
the attachment structures, such that the alignment members are  
vertically aligned to define a vertical plane which is  
perpendicular to a putting surface.

30        20.     The golf putting aid of claim 19, wherein the  
alignment members are flexible.

          21.     The golf putting aid of claim 19, wherein the  
35        alignment members are non-adjustable in the vertical plane

which is perpendicular to the putting surface.

5            22. The golf putting aid of claim 19, further comprising  
a target attached to the first attachment structure.

10           23. The golf putting aid of claim 22, wherein the target  
has an opening which is centered with respect to the vertical  
plane, and wherein the opening is at least as large as a  
regulation size golf ball.

15           24. The golf putting aid of claim 23, wherein the target  
is removably attached to the first attachment structure such  
that the target may be replaced with another target.

20           25. The golf putting aid of claim 19, further comprising  
at least one support member attached to the attachment  
structures for supporting the attachment structures  
perpendicular to the putting surface.

25           26. The golf putting aid of claim 25, wherein the at  
least one support member is bowed downwardly towards the  
putting surface.

30           27. The golf putting aid of claim 25, wherein the at  
least one support member is bowed downwardly towards the  
putting surface such that at least a portion of the support  
member is disposed lower than the lower alignment member.

35           28. The golf putting aid of claim 25, wherein the at  
least one support member is compactable such that when it is  
desired to store the putting aid, the putting aid occupies  
less space.

29. The golf putting aid of claim 28, wherein the at least one support member contains a hinge such that when it is  
5 desired to store the putting aid, the at least one support member rotates about the hinge, such that the putting aid occupies less space.

30. The golf putting aid of claim 29, wherein the  
10 alignment members are flexible such that when the at least one support member is compacted, the alignment members are compacted.

31. The golf putting aid of claim 19, further comprising  
15 a plurality of reference markers to be used by a golfer as reference points during the golfer's putting stroke, wherein each reference marker is slidable along one of the upper alignment member and the lower alignment member.

32. The golf putting aid of claim 31, wherein the  
20 plurality of reference markers includes a back swing reference marker to be used by the golfer to aid the golfer in determining when to terminate the golfer's back swing, a follow through reference marker to be used by the golfer to aid the golfer in determining when to terminate the golfer's  
25 follow through and a ball placement reference marker to be used by the golfer aid the golfer in positioning the golf ball on the putting surface and concentric with the ball marker, such that a center line of the ball is vertically aligned with the vertical plane.

30        33. A golf putting aid comprising:  
         first and second attachment structures;  
         an upper alignment member attached to the attachment structures; and  
35        a lower alignment member attached to the attachment

structures such that the alignment members are vertically aligned to define a vertical plane which is perpendicular to a putting surface, wherein at least one of the first and second attachment structures contains a pointed lower end for insertion into a putting surface.

34. The golf putting aid of claim 33, wherein the alignment members are flexible.

35. The golf putting aid of claim 33, wherein the alignment members are non-adjustable in the vertical plane which is perpendicular to the putting surface.

36. The golf putting aid of claim 33, wherein the putting aid is longitudinally adjustable such that the putting aid may be used to practice putts of varying lengths.

37. The golf putting aid of claim 33, wherein the second attachment structure has an upper opening through which an upper alignment member extends and a lower opening through which the lower alignment member extends such a distance between the attachment structures can be varied by moving the second attachment structure relative to the alignment members.

38. The golf putting aid of claim 33, wherein the alignment members are compactable, such that when it is desired to store the putting aid, the putting aid occupies less space.

39. The golf putting aid of claim 33, wherein the alignment members are flexible.

40. The golf putting aid of claim 33, further comprising a plurality of reference markers to be used by a golfer as reference points during the golfer's putting stroke, wherein

each reference marker is slidable along one of the upper alignment member and the lower alignment member.

5           41. The golf putting aid of claim 40, wherein the plurality of reference markers includes a back swing reference marker to be used by the golfer to aid the golfer in determining when to terminate the golfer's back swing, a follow through reference marker to be used by the golfer to aid the golfer in determining when to terminate the golfer's follow through and a ball placement reference marker to be used by the golfer aid the golfer in positioning the golf ball concentric with the ball marker such that a center line of the ball is vertically aligned with the vertical plane.

15           42. A method for aiding a golfer in putting a golf ball comprising:

20           providing upper and lower alignment members defining a vertical plane, which is perpendicular to a putting surface and in line with a target line;

          positioning the golf ball on the putting surface under the alignment members such that a centerline of the golf ball is aligned with the target line;

25           aligning a line of sight of the golfer with the vertical plane, such that the upper alignment member obscures the lower alignment member; and

30           swinging a putter and hitting the ball while aligning the line of sight of the golfer with the vertical plane, such that the upper alignment member obscures the lower alignment member.

          43. The method of claim 42, further comprising:

          aligning an aim line of the putter such that the alignment members obscure the aim line of the putter; and

35           maintaining both the alignment of the golfer's line of



sight and the alignment of the aim line of the putter during a putting stroke.

5            44. The method of claim 43, further comprising providing a ball reference marker and aligning the golf ball such that the ball reference marker obscures a center point of the golf ball when the golf ball is positioned on the putting surface.

10           45. The method of claim 44, further comprising providing a back swing reference marker for guiding a back swing, and providing a follow through reference marker for guiding a follow through.

15           46. The method of claim 45, wherein the putting stroke includes swinging the putter back word until the back swing reference marker obscures a portion of the putter and swinging the putter forward until the follow through reference marker obscures a portion of the putter.